



Office of Civil Rights

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ALTERNATE FORMATS AND RESOURCES

REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE ALTERNATE FORMATS

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires all public entities to ensure “equally effective communication” of information to all people served, including qualified individuals with disabilities. To fulfill this obligation, King County may need to provide auxiliary aids and services, which include assistive listening devices, sign language interpreters, and written materials in alternate formats – large print, Braille, computer disk or electronic format, or audio cassette tape.

Alternate formats of print materials are to be provided just as county programs would provide any other reasonable accommodation upon request by a qualified person with a disability. There is no obligation to have an alternate format immediately available – materials are not required to be in alternate formats in case someone may want it in the future. However, it may be advisable to have some high-use publications readily available in alternate formats.

[“Alternative” or “accessible” may also be used to describe non-standard formats.]

REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE THE FORMAT REQUESTED

King County must give “primary consideration” to the specific aid or service requested. For example, if someone asks for Brailled material, we must try to provide the information in Braille. The county agency can provide a different format only if the agency can demonstrate that another less expensive but “equally effective means of providing access” is available, or that use of the means requested would result in undue financial or administrative hardship.

Providing alternate formats is not just an issue of disability law compliance – it’s a matter of good customer service.

If someone requests a certain alternate format, you may offer other alternatives.

For example, if someone asks for information in Braille, you may mention that you can also provide it on computer disk. The person may opt for the computer disk, or may confirm the request for Braille due to a preference for having a “hard copy” of the information.

Depending upon the information requested, in some cases you may determine the request is not a reasonable accommodation. For example, if someone wants a bus schedule in Braille, you might refer the person to other options, such as the Rider Information Line or the Metro web site. Or you may want to discuss which particular pickup locations and times of day are most often used by the person (thus limiting the volume of Braille). Before you make a decision about denying an accommodation request, it's best to contact OCR's Disability Compliance Specialist, who can assist you in analyzing the request and available resources.

You cannot charge special fees for materials in alternate formats:

King County departments may not set a fee for alternate format materials (such as large print, Braille, or tape recordings) that is greater than the amount charged for the same material in a standard format. For example, if a report sells for \$2.00, you may only charge \$2.00 for an alternate format version of the report, even if it cost more than that to produce.

NOTIFICATION THAT ALTERNATE FORMATS ARE AVAILABLE

In all print materials for the public, include a statement that alternate formats are available upon request for people with disabilities. There is no specific language prescribed for the notification. Here are some examples for the text:

- Available in alternate formats.
- Information presented here is available in alternate formats.
- This material is available in alternate formats for people with disabilities upon request. Call [name and telephone number, including TTY Relay: 711].
- This booklet will be provided in alternate formats for individuals with disabilities upon request. [When contact information is included elsewhere in the print material so it's clear which staff member will handle the alternate format request.]
- This material will be provided in alternate formats such as large print, Braille, audio cassette, or computer disk to individuals with disabilities upon request.

The notification sentence should be in a sans serif, at least 14 point font, so individuals who need large print will be able to read it.

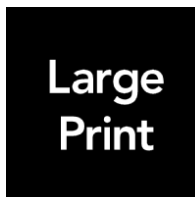
Public Hearings with Print Information

If you plan to provide print materials at a public hearing, be sure to include on the public hearing notices that print materials are available in alternate formats by calling [name] at [telephone numbers, including TTY] by [date – deadline]. This will help ensure that everyone will have access to information at the public hearing, and that you will have enough time to prepare the alternate formats requested.

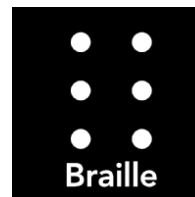
Symbols to Indicate Availability of Alternate Formats

There are symbols that can help you advertise your available alternate formats. You can place these symbols next to the relevant information in your publications, such as program brochures, application forms, event flyers, public meeting notices, etc.

Here are symbols that denote alternate format access:



Large print version available
(symbol should be 18 point+)



Brailled version available

HOW TO PROVIDE ALTERNATE FORMATS

Provide the requested alternate format in a timely fashion. Depending upon the format requested, it may take a few minutes, a day, a week, or more to provide the material in alternate format. Making a large print version or putting the document on a computer disk is easily and quickly accomplished. Providing a Braille version of information may take up to a week or longer, depending upon the document's length and complexity.

When providing alternate formats, it is not necessary to include any special design elements, graphics, or formatting in the original publication. Reasonable accommodation is about ensuring everyone has access to the same information.

Large Print

This is one of the easiest alternate formats to provide if the document was produced by one of the common word processing programs (e.g., Word or WordPerfect). When someone requests a document in large print, ask if they have a preferred font style and/or font size. Individual needs vary – one person may request the document in Univers 14-point font, while another may request Arial 18-point bold font. Examples:

Univers 14-point font

Arial 18-point bold font

As a default, use Arial font. After changing the font, you may need to do some reformatting – sometimes making a large print version “throws off” a document, just as changing margins can. If the document is produced by software such as PageMaker, it may take more time, as conversion to a more easily manipulated document may be required.

Computer Disk

This is a relatively easy to provide alternate format, particularly if the document was produced by a common word processing program (e.g., Word or WordPerfect). If the individual does not specify the document to be a certain type of file, be sure to ask. Provide the document in a way that is compatible with the individual’s software.

Sometimes, simply saving a copy of the original document onto a disk will fulfill the individual’s request. Occasionally, you may need to save the file as a different format of document onto a disk. For example, you may have a request to provide a Word document on disk in an older Word format, MS-DOS text, or Word for Macintosh.

Braille

King County does not have Braille transcription services internally, so you must use an outside vendor, which means it will take more time to provide Braille versions of documents.

If the document is fairly short and straightforward, it can be transcribed into Braille within a few days. If the document is longer and/or complex, you will need to confirm delivery date with the vendor. If the information is already a Word, WordPerfect, or text file document, you can e-mail the document to the Braille vendor. If it is in PageMaker, you will need to convert it to an acceptable type of file before sending it to the vendor. If it is some other type of document, contact the vendor to discuss their needs.

In responding to a Braille request, ask whether the person wants the document in Braille Grade 1 or Grade 2. Tell the Braille vendor which Braille grade to produce.

Grade 1 consists of the standard Braille alphabet, with no contractions or abbreviations. Grade 2 or “contracted Braille” is much more widely used – it is faster and easier for skilled Braille readers.

Tape Recording

This alternate format is not as commonly used as the ones described above. King County has limited tape recording facilities, and your staff (or an outside vendor) must produce a recorded tape if that is the preferred format. Follow the guidelines outlined in OCR’s “Tape Recording Guide” online at kcweb.metrokc.gov/dias/ocre/taping.pdf. Contact OCR if you have questions.

SOURCES FOR ALTERNATE FORMATS (IN WASHINGTON)

Braille Transcription

Washington Braille Access Center

Washington School for the Blind
2310 East 13th Street
Vancouver, Washington 98661

Web site: www.wssb.wa.gov

Contacts: Colleen Lines
Kandi Lukowski
Telephone: 360-696-6321, ext. 158
TTY: 360-696-6321, ext. 171
Fax: 360-737-2120
e-mail: braille@wssb.wa.gov

The Braille Access Center is a fee for service agency providing quality, accurate braille to customers in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act.

TechAdapt, Inc.

Braille Transcription/NIMAS Conversion

Web site: www.techadapt.com

Contact: Sharon von See
Braille Coordinator
Telephone: 360-306-1676
Fax: 360-544-0112

TechAdapt offers full transcription services for literary, Nemeth (mathematics) and computer Braille; transcribers are certified by the Library of Congress.

General Instructions:

- you may send the document to be Brailled by e-mail, fax or on disk
- the file should be in Word, WordPerfect, text file, or PDF
- if the file is in PageMaker, you will need to convert it to a different type of file
- if you have only a print copy, it can be scanned or re-typed for an additional fee
- note whether to produce it in Grade 2 (contracted) or Grade 1 (uncontracted) Braille
- costs vary, so confirm estimated cost with the vendor
- Brailled materials can be sent to you with an invoice, or the vendor may send materials directly to the individual and the invoice to you
- Braille materials may be sent directly to the individual free of charge via the U.S. Postal Service "Free Matter for the Blind"
- spreadsheets and graphs can be Brailled,, but in a different format according to the Braille Code.

Audio Cassette Tape

State Audio Services

Department: Disability Support Services
Central Washington University
400 E. University Way
Ellensburg, Washington 98926-7431

Attn: Pam Wilson
Telephone: 509-963-2171
TTY: 509-963-2143
Fax: 509-963-3235
e-mail: WilsonP@cwu.edu

Send a print copy of the material you need recorded. Within a day or two, they will fax back a quote and an order form.

King County Department of Transportation – Accessible Services Section

King County employees may use equipment at KCDOT's Accessible Services Section to do the recording and/or duplication yourself at their location. You must provide the tapes. Contact Chris Arnbrister to coordinate date/time. He has an outline of tips to assist you in doing the recording, and he is available to explain the process to get you started. It is fairly simple to do, but it can be time-consuming for longer, more complex documents.

Contact: Chris Arnbrister, Transit Planner
Telephone: 206-205-6570

FREE POSTAGE FOR ALTERNATE FORMAT MATERIALS

Most alternate formatted materials can be mailed free through the U.S. Postal Service to people who are blind, low vision, or who cannot use or read conventionally printed materials due to a physical disability. This includes brochures, information sheets, booklets, and other reading matter that is in Braille, large print (14-point or larger), or on tape.

To use this service, omit stamps and print the words **Free Matter for the Blind & Handicapped** in the upper right hand corner of the envelope or package. These materials are subject to inspection by the Postal Service and may not contain any advertising. Handwritten or standard size typewritten letters are subject to regular postage.

Note: Inclusion in this resource list does not constitute endorsement by King County government, nor does omission imply non-endorsement. Our goal is to provide you with information on some available key resources.

Please let us know if you are aware of a useful resource missing from this list.